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SUBJECT: A Definite "Maybe" from Austria on Pakistan's IDPs

REF: A. SECSTATE 58282 B. VIENNA 604

11. Post delivered ref A demarche June 8 to the MFA Head of Humanitarian Aid, Gerhard Weinberger, and to the MFA Political Director, Stefan Lehne. Weinberger said that the GOA working level had been considering a contribution for Pakistan's IDPs, but it would be several weeks before a decision was made. He further indicated that if such a contribution were made, it would be a nominal amount. Upon receiving a similarly noncommittal response in a separate meeting June 9, Charge pressed Lehne for more definite assistance, pointing out the political and domestic Austrian (i.e., narcotics trade) implications as well as the humanitarian need.

12. The GOA has been very reluctant to have any involvement in Pakistan, and had previously ruled out any help in favor of aid to Sri Lanka IDPs (ref B). Its few remaining small-scale development aid projects are being terminated this year. Austria last gave humanitarian aid to Pakistan after the 2007 earthquake, when it helped reconstruct houses and water systems.

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